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RHHMHBA/COMPACFLT PEARL HARBOR HI//N541// PRIORITY
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SUBJECT: TOKYO MEDIA REACTION - FRANCE'S RETURN TO NATO

¶1. LEAD STORIES: Most Wednesday morning papers led with Prime Minister Fukuda's remarks to foreign press on Tuesday hinting at a hike in the consumption tax.

¶2. "France Calling for NATO Renewal" On French President Sarkozy's release on Tuesday of the nation's new security strategy, a correspondent for the top-circulation, moderate Yomiuri wrote from Paris (6/18): "The new policy set forth Paris's intention to fully return to the military component of NATO on the condition that France will maintain its own nuclear arsenal and that the EU will enhance its military capabilities. France's strategy of taking the initiative in enhancing European defense while reintegrating into NATO appears to be entering a new stage.... Sarkozy's policy represents a break from France's traditional Gaullist approach. However, this change is apparently not meant to follow the U.S. but is rather aimed at drawing concessions from it.... In contrast with the U.S., which uses NATO as a tool for bringing the Europeans into its own global military strategy, France insists that Washington should attach more importance to Europe and that NATO should remain a collective security mechanism."

SCHIEFFER